

Michigan's State Planning Project for the Uninsured

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SPG WORKGROUPS

- Jan Christensen will appoint a facilitator for each workgroup.
- Workgroups will ascertain whether all interests are represented on the workgroup at the first meeting. If certain types of interests are not present, representatives from those missing groups, organizations or constituencies shall be recruited. Workgroups shall periodically reassess whether other groups, organizations or constituencies should be invited to participate.
- Membership on the workgroups is voluntary but if an issue comes to a vote, only one person from each organization may vote.
- Each workgroup member should attend all meetings for the entire term of the workgroup.
- An alternate may be appointed for each member, but please keep each other apprized of the discussion and decisions of the workgroup.

The workgroups will adhere to the agreed upon timeline and produce work products in a timely fashion.

Participants will agree to ground rules to facilitate the quality of the communication, including:

Ground rules for an effective and respectful communication

- Only one person may speak at a time.
- Resist defending positions; rather look for common ground and areas of agreement.
- Agree on what important words mean.
- When speaking explain the reasons behind your statements and ask for feedback from the group.
- Speak to be understood, not to win.
- Ask questions to understand the rationale and data behind the position of others.
- Test your assumptions and inferences by asking questions.
- Don't assume motives behind the statement of others. Assume positive intent.
- Be sensitive to differences in perspectives.
- Avoid debating issues (discussion, not debate) and assigning blame.
- Do not interrupt others or monopolize the communication. Raise your hand to speak and the facilitator will keep a list with the order (all members are expected to participate with their perspective).
- Avoid personal attacks, cheap shots or loaded questions. Use open-ended questions.
- Keep discussion focused.
- Keep the focus on agenda items.
- When speaking be brief and to the point (try to give examples).
- Attend all meetings.
- Be on time for meetings.

Ground rules for decision-making

The Task Force will use the procedure of “Consensus with Qualification” to make decisions. Here consensus does not mean 100 percent agreement on everything by all participants. It means that each individual is able to accept a proposal or idea 80 percent or that 80 percent of participants are willing to completely accept a proposal or idea. It also means that all concerns have been addressed and everyone has been heard and understood. Thus, consensus can be defined as a state of mutual agreement among members of a group where all legitimate concerns of participants have been addressed to the satisfaction of the group. Consensus with qualification works like this:

An agenda is developed in advance containing three types of topics:

- Reports (recent events of work)
- Open Discussion (problem solving and brainstorming)
- Proposals (for group decision)

Proposals are presented and clarified to the group.

Participants grade the proposal as:

- Totally agree
- Can live with it
- Have legitimate concerns (possible consequences of the proposal that are contrary to the goals of the group)

Concerns are listed and addressed by the group. Changes can be made to the proposal.

If the group fails to reach consensus, participants will clarify their objections while searching for areas of agreement. Information about the inability to reach consensus will be forwarded to the Advisory Council.

Staff will prepare a summary of each meeting. They will make the summary available to participants before the next meeting, if possible.

Roles

Facilitators: Help participants and the group to follow ground rules, identify, clarify and reframe issues, test parties’ assumptions / inferences, help resolve disputes, make presentations to the Advisory Council

Participants: Actively participate in the discussion, follow the ground rules, work hard on the issues not the people, and provide feedback on reports and future agendas.